

Congressman Pete Stark **Working for a Real Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit**

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Pete Stark

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Congressman Pete Stark



*Working to Protect
Medicare and Add
a Real Prescription
Drug Benefit*

I am extremely disappointed that the Bush Administration and the Republicans in Congress recently passed a Medicare prescription drug bill through the House that falls far short of what seniors and people with disabilities need and deserve.

I continue to lead the Democratic charge in Congress for a guaranteed prescription drug benefit in Medicare that is affordable, meaningful and available to all seniors.

Under the plan I co-authored (H.R. 1199), a prescription drug benefit would be added to Medicare with a monthly premium of \$25, a \$100 annual deductible and 20% beneficiary copayments. It would also provide catastrophic coverage for out-of-pocket drug costs above \$2000 a year. This is a real prescription drug benefit that will help seniors with the high cost of their medications.

Rep. Pete Stark: “The House Medicare drug bill fails seniors.”

I am working to strengthen Medicare and help seniors with the cost of their medications. Sadly, my Republican colleagues are pushing legislation that is full of hollow promises and takes dangerous steps toward privatizing Medicare.

The House Republican Medicare bill (H.R. 1) does nothing to reduce the cost of prescription drugs. Instead, it explicitly prohibits the government from negotiating with drug manufacturers to get a better deal for America’s seniors. No wonder this is a bill that America’s pharmaceutical industry supports.

Under the their bill, anyone with drug costs between \$2000 and \$5000 in a year will receive no prescription drug benefit, even though they will continue paying Medicare prescription drug premiums. This coverage gap is so wide that 50% of America’s seniors will fall into it.



The House bill also turns Medicare over to HMOs and the private health insurance industry. There is absolutely no fallback for seniors to get prescription drug coverage if there isn’t a private plan available in their community. Seniors could lose the freedom to choose their own doctor, and would not be guaranteed the same set of benefits that they get today. Much like before Medicare existed, a senior’s ability to get the health care they need would depend upon their ability to pay.

I’m working in Congress to strengthen Medicare, not dismantle it, and I will continue to oppose these privatization efforts.

Pete Stark meets with local seniors about Medicare prescription drug legislation.

Medicare Prescription Drugs: House Bill vs. Pete Stark’s Proposal

	House Bill (H.R. 1)	Stark’s Bill (H.R. 1199)
Guaranteed Lower Drug Prices	No	Yes
Guaranteed Defined Prescription Drug Benefit	No	Yes
Guaranteed Monthly Premium	No	Yes
Fallback Prescription Drug Plan	No	Yes
Ensures Same Benefit and Same Premiums for Rural Beneficiaries	No	Yes
Coverage for Prescribed Medicines	Limited	Yes
Coverage Gap	Yes	No
Turns Medicare into a Voucher Program	Yes	No
Increases Costs for Doctors’ Visits	Yes	No
Annual Deductible	\$250	\$100

